

# Anatomy of a Hand Missal

To use a hand missal, you need to know where things are. It is good to spend some time with your missal and page through it to locate the various sections and to see what other gems might be hiding there. Yours might be slightly different, but a typical missal layout is as follows:

**Proper of Seasons** - the one-year cycle of the liturgical year, including Masses for Sundays, seasonal days with propers (such as Lent), and moveable feasts

**Ordinary of the Mass** - the unchanging parts of the Mass such as the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar, the Gloria, Credo, Roman Canon, etc.; Prefaces (before the Sanctus) are sometimes in the Ordinary or directly before it and vary according to the season or feast

**Commons** - general proper prayers for various categories of saints (Martyr, Pastor, Virgin, etc.) that are used to supplement a saint's Mass or offer Mass for a saint not on the calendar

**Proper of Saints** - Masses honoring saints on particular calendar days; these will often point you to other pages with readings found in the commons (there is sometimes a supplemental section at the back of the missal as well)

**Ritual Masses & Votive Masses** - Ritual Masses such as Funerals, Weddings, Confirmations, etc. and Votive Masses such as Most Sacred Heart, Blessed Virgin Mary on Saturday, etc.

**Popular Prayers & Devotions** - various other prayers, litanies, Stations, and such that are not part of the Mass but included to promote devotional practice before, during, or after Masses

## Preparing your Hand Missal for Holy Mass

1. **Determine the Liturgical Day.** Sometimes this is easy if it is a Sunday or a saint's feast. Other times the priest has options of which saint to celebrate or to celebrate a votive Mass or a daily Mass for the Dead and you just have to do your best to figure it out on the fly! You can check <http://divinumofficium.com> for assistance with this part.
2. **Set the ribbons.** A) If it's a Sunday, you'll have one ribbon to set in the Proper of Seasons. If you go weekly it may be set from last week. (Thank you, past self!) If a weekday, you may have a ribbon in the propers and another in the commons. B) Set another at the Ordinary for the beginning of the Mass. C) You can also set the preface if you know it and any other devotional prayers you would like to pray.
3. **Pray.** If the priest chooses an option that you don't have marked and aren't sure you can find, you can always just follow along with the Ordinary parts and benefit greatly.

	Proper of Seasons	Ordinary	Commons	Proper of Saints	Rituals & Votives	Prayers & Devotions
Baronius	141	895	981	1096	1600	25, 1869
Angelus	135	833	931	1041	1519	20, 1787
SJ Daily	33	639	1137	715	1222	1292
Stedman	67	35	-	309	-	329